

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Istook Vows Vigilance Against EPA Threat

Oklahoma City - Concerned that Oklahoma City may be on a target list of the Environmental Protection Agency, Congressman Ernest Istook, (R-5th District), today vowed to do all he can to "keep the EPA from going overboard."

Last year, the EPA made controversial changes in clean air standards. Those have been widely criticized as unrealistic, not based on science and hugely-expensive, while not producing any significant health benefits. Oklahoma City has been able to meet the standards set before 1997, but is concerned that meeting the new ones may be impossible.

Istook says there's concern that the EPA has deliberately set unreachable goals, to give it an excuse to intervene and take charge in more parts of the country. **"Everybody wants clean air,"** Istook said, **"but Oklahoma shouldn't have to pay a price just to help the EPA expand its bureaucracy."** If the EPA finds the city out of compliance, it can impose costly new controls on area business and industry, driving up prices and adding controls on consumers, such as limiting lawn-mowing and charcoal grills.

Istook expressed frustration that Congress has not acted more forcefully to halt the EPA power grab. Istook said he has contacted key local officials to step up his coordination with them, as well as with U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe, (R-OK), who chairs the Senate's Clean Air Subcommittee, and has been a leader in fighting the tougher standards.

One major issue is whether Oklahoma City will be held accountable for pollutants beyond its control, such as from the Mexico fires this summer, and such as airborne particles blown north from the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"Senator Inhofe and others have asked EPA to be reasonable and cooperative, but EPA hasn't given us any assurance that it will be," Istook noted. **"In addition to working with EPA on Oklahoma City's specific case, I hope we'll address this with legislation or a rider on an appropriations bill before Congress winds up its work this year."**